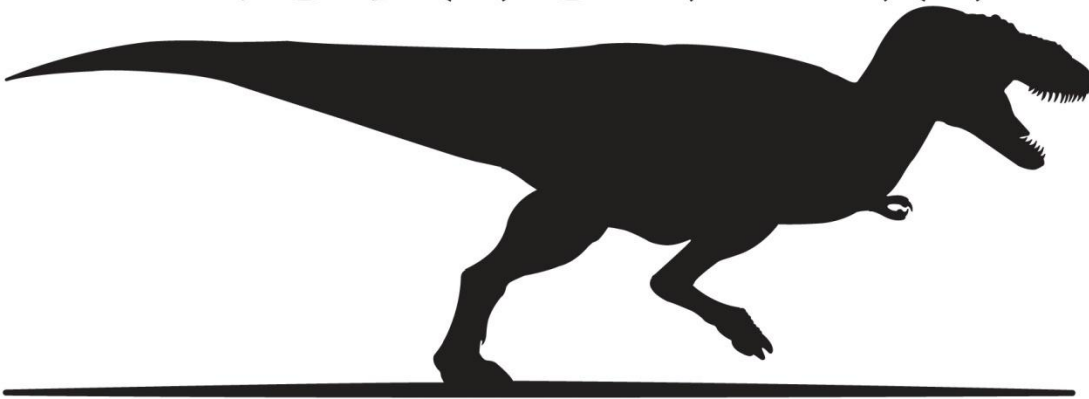


THE MONTANA DINOSAUR TRAIL



What Happened Along The
Trail In 2011?

7th Year
MT Dinosaur Trail Facility
Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY...What Happened Along the Montana Dinosaur Trail in 2011, the Seventh Year of this Montana Tourism Trail Promotion?

VISITATION IN 2011

The 14 Montana Dinosaur Trail facilities reported hosting a record 315,794 visitors in 2011! That's almost 100,000 more visitors than the trail's inaugural year 2005 – a 46% increase - and a 12% increase over 2010. Visitation growth was not experienced all along the trail. Five facilities reported more visitors than 2010 – three set new visitation records, one stayed even, but eight reported fewer visitors than in the previous year.

The largest visitor increase – 77% - came at the Fort Peck Interpretive Center. Center Manager Michele Fromdahl says "People, people and more people came from all over to see (Fort Peck Dam's) spillway running and the flooded recreation areas around the lake (caused by record high waters) and then stopped into the Interpretive Center." She adds that Fort Peck Lake had one of the best fishing years in recent memory.

The Old Trail Museum in Choteau set a new record with a 60% increase in visitors over 2010. Museum staff Julie Ameline credits the increase to improved displays "involving the Blackfeet Indian Reservation and the Metis" developed through a partnership with the DeLaSalle and Cuts Wood Schools in Browning and Choteau Elementary School. The display project was funded by the MT Office of Public Instruction and the MT Historical Society. The Museum also dropped their admission fee and replaced it with a requested donation system.

The Two Medicine Dinosaur Center set a new record with a 31% jump in visitor numbers. Other facilities experiencing visitor increases in 2011 included:

- H. Earl Clack Museum – 8%
- Museum of the Rockies – 14%

The Upper Musselshell Museum held even with 2010 visitation while declines were reported at:

- Blaine County Museum – down 8%
- Carter County Museum – down 3%
- Depot Museum – 28% down from their record year in 2010
- Garfield County Museum – down 21%
- Great Plains Dinosaur Museum – down 20%
- Makoshika Dinosaur Museum – down 9%
- Makoshika State Park – down 11%
- Phillips County Museum – 29%

Four out of ten trail facility visitors – 40% or 136,317 – were reported from out of state. That's down slightly from 2010's 47% non-resident visitor draw, but up 30% since the trail promotion program's beginning. Garfield County Museum once again led the trail with the percent of visitors from outside Montana with 71%. The other trail facility reports were:

- Blaine County Museum – 67%
- Carter County Museum – 49%
- Depot Museum – 38%
- Fort Peck Interpretive Center – 38%
- Great Plains Dinosaur Museum – 50%
- H. Earl Clack Museum – 9%
- Makoshika Dinosaur Museum – 46%
- Makoshika State Park – 6%
- Museum of the Rockies – 34%
- Old Trail Museum – 47%
- Phillips County Museum - 15%
- Two Medicine Dinosaur Center – 50%
- Upper Musselshell Museum – 42%

MONTANA DINOSAUR TRAIL FACEBOOK PAGE

The Montana Dinosaur Trail Facebook page ended 2011 with 109 members. More facilities posted information on the Group Page, but much more can be done with this Social Media tool. Again, trail members should work on a strategy for using this social media tool to promote the trail and all the activities the trail partners are planning.

MONTANA DINOSAUR TRAIL PREHISTORIC PASSPORT

Sales & Stamping Incentives

The highlight of the prehistoric passport program this year was the incentive program. Not all facilities participated, but those that did found it had a lot of benefits. It brought awareness to the passport program by current and new employees. They learned how important it was to "offer" the passport, then the passport sold itself. At our Spring Meeting April 28 we will present the grand prize, "Stygi" – a cast skull of a Stygimoloch donated by the Two Medicine Dinosaur Center and valued at \$2500 - to the H. Earl Clack Museum for increasing their passport sales and stamping the most.

Facilities will want to decide if they want another incentive program this spring and what would be as good a prize as "Stygi." Decisions to be made include: How would you like it formatted, goals measured and awards given. Any ideas would be appreciated. We need a decision on this at the Spring Meeting.

New Updated Passports – Coming in 2012!

Last year about 400 passports were sold. We have 311 Prehistoric Passports left. Many facilities still have passports left for the coming year.

From facility input, it was decided that everyone should work to sell the Passports they have during 2012. After Memorial Day - when all facilities are open - we will begin gathering the information needed and redo the passport. Timeline for this would be June through the end of the summer to get next edition of the Passport ready for printing. At this time, the project team for the Passport update is: Jane Ereaux, Sue Frary, Dixie Stordahl and Dave Trexler. With all the facilities support and cooperation, they will do a great job completing the prehistoric passport revision.

Passport Program Financial Report

Bank Balance as of 12-31-10	\$3,730.64
Expenses:	
Supplies & Postage	215.49
Canadian Exchange	.98
Incentive Program Award Money	350.00
Revenue:	
Retail Sales Jane Ereaux@\$5.00+\$2.00 postage	217.00
Passports Sold to Facilities @\$2.50	752.00
Bank Balance as of 12-31-11	\$4,133.64

MT Dinosaur Trail Passport Completions

Trail facilities reported 26 people completed filling out their passports in 2011. Below is information about 17 of those individuals with the final two listings including great comments from their families:

- Thomas Roe, Boise, ID, finished at the Clack Museum
- Greg Harris, Wilmington DE, finished at the Makoshika Dinosaur Museum
- Alec Rohde, Bedford, TX, finished at Carter County Museum
- Deborah Rohde, Bedford, TX, finished at Carter County Museum
- Destiny Myers, Rogers, AR, finished at Carter County Museum
- Jordan Arnold, Bloomington MN, finished at the Great Plains Dinosaur Museum

- Ken Guenther, Oslo, MN, finished at the Fort Peck Interpretive Center
- Shad, Dawson, Alexis, and Angela Clingsmith, Belgrade, MT, finished at the Museum of the Rockies
- Finn, Dawn, Greta, and Greg Anderson, Helena, MT, finished at the Museum of the Rockies
- Chris Cauchon, Spokane Valley, WA, finished the trail at Upper Musselshell Museum, 8-10-11. His family wrote:

"We thank you for making the Montana Dinosaur Trail possible. My son has been fascinated by dinosaurs since he was about 4 years old. When we found out about the Dinosaur Trail we had to do it. We had a wonderful time and the people in Montana are some of the nicest I have ever met. Everywhere we went people were so friendly. We saw parts of your state I am sure we would never have traveled to without the trail. You have a beautiful state. Thank you again for a wonderful memory with our son. Sincerely, Sally, Bill and Chris"

- Evan Mayhew, New Market, MD, finished at Upper Musselshell Museum, 7-5-11, His Grandfather wrote:

"I would like to express my sincere appreciation to your staff and particularly your volunteers. What an asset they are to the success of this program."

We traveled from Maryland in June with our 5 year old grandson with the goal of completing the Dinosaur Trail. I'm sure some of the staff remembers the bright little boy with a mastery of dinosaur facts and vocabulary. Everyone bent over backward to make his visit enjoyable and it certainly was. We were under some time constraints coming across Rt. 2 what with much construction. We were doing Fort Peck to Rudyard in one day. Later in the day we didn't think we would make the last two museums. Construction was taking its toll. The staff at the museums at each stop called ahead to make sure they know we were coming. We pulled into Rudyard at 3:45 and there was the staff waiting for us. She didn't rush us and we had a very good visit.

When we visited Two Medicine Dinosaur Museum in Bynum we were met by a paleontologist from Texas who had talked to some of the other museums and was waiting for our grandson. He answered questions and provided much information.

This trip would not have been nearly as successful without the cooperation, knowledge, and infinite patience of your fine staffs and volunteers. We successfully completed the Dinosaur 'Trail' and are proudly awaiting our t-shirt. Guess what a show-and-tell for kindergarten will be when school starts? All our thanks, Bob, Lynn Powell and Evan"

MONTANA DINOSAUR TRAIL WEB PORTAL

The Montana Office of Tourism's web analytics program converted to a more precise measurement of web traffic in late summer 2009. Based on daily average visit usage in 2009 compared with actual counts in 2010, the trail web portal – www.mtdinotrail.org – saw a 23% drop in visitors in 2011 – 20,440 versus 26,414 in 2010.

Here's some web portal statistics for 2011:

- The average daily visitor count – 56
- Monday and Tuesday are the busiest user days
- The average length of visit – 6:53 minutes
- 86% of the visitors were from the US
- The 14% who are international visitors came primarily from Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and the Phillipines.
- 24% of the users came directly to the site – they typed in the web portal address.
 - 28% were referred by Google
 - 5% by MT Office of Tourism's Montana Kids site
 - 8.5% came from www.havremt.com
 - 4.6% from www.visitmt.com.
 - 28% were referred to the site from "Other."

WHAT'S NEW FOR 2012?

- Blaine County Museum is remodeling the Look, Touch & Wonder Room, expanding their Dino retail section.
- Great Plains Dinosaur Museum and Field Station is featuring a new Ceretopsin display.
- H. Earl Clack Museum hours during the winter are Tuesday – Saturday, 1 – 5 PM. Summer hours are yet to be determined by the Board.
- Makoshika Dinosaur Museum is open year round (with a few exceptions) Mon-Fri 10 am-5 pm
- Museum of the Rockies will have a new T.rex display in Summer 2012, admission prices went up one dollar.
- Old Trail Museum daily hours of operation are now 9 am-5 pm, Memorial Day to Labor Day
- Two Medicine Dinosaur Center is completely remodeling facility and adding a second floor Education Center. Project funding assisted by 2011 TIIP Grant, completion expected in May 2012.
- Upper Musselshell Museum is expanding dinosaur exhibits and now have a Discovery Trunk available for school use. The trunk was put together by Museum volunteers.

2012 EVENTS PLANNED

- TBD, Old Trail Museum, Wednesday evening and Children's programming from paleontologists that visit the area each summer.
- TBD, H. Earl Clack Museum, Welcome Stygi Celebration
- TBD, Blaine County Museum, Ken Olson dinosaur book signing event
- April 7, 10 am, Museum of the Rockies Annual Dinosaur Egg Hunt is free to the public; Immediately following inside museum is Eggstravaganza which is free with Museum admission.
- April 28, Noon-5 pm, Ekalaka, Carter County Museum, MT Dinosaur Trail Facility & Funder Spring Meeting, followed by community dinner and MT Dinosaur Trail presentation
- May 5, 2-5pm, Museum of the Rockies Dinosaur Family Day, Free with admission
- May 19, 9 am, Two Medicine Dinosaur Center "Grand Reopening" celebrating their new Education Center addition and rearranged displays
- June 8, Great Plains Dinosaur Museum; 5 pm unveil new Ceretopsian Display, 6 pm Dancing with Dinos
- June 9, Malta, Dino Days activities at Great Plains Dinosaur Museum and Phillips County Museum – Pancake Breakfast, children's activities, and more
- June 23, Fort Peck Interpretive Center, 75th Anniversary of the Fort Peck Dam
- June 29 or 30, Depot Museum, Rudyard, working on a guided public tour to a Field Dig Site.
- July 30-Aug. 3 Summer Field Dig, Great Plains Dinosaur Center & Field Station
- Aug 20- 24, Summer Field Dig, Great Plains Dinosaur Center & Field Station

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